Navigating Healthcare Alone

Building Your Support Team

Practical guidance for adults at every stage of adulthood - and the people who care about them.

You may have people who care about you and still find yourself navigating healthcare alone. Friends may be working, family may live elsewhere, or you may not feel comfortable asking for help. Sometimes your support network is small.

You do not need to wait until things feel unmanageable to seek support. Start by identifying what would make your next step easier.

1. Decide where help would make a difference

Think about what is taking the most energy: preparing questions, attending appointments, keeping notes, arranging transportation, organizing meals or following up on services. You may want help with one task rather than every part of your care.

> Ask yourself: What can I manage comfortably? What would I like someone alongside me for? What do I want to keep private?

2. Ask for something specific

A clear request gives someone a chance to consider what they can realistically offer. Agree on the task, timing and any limits. If they cannot help, ask someone else or explore a service.

> “Could you join my appointment and take notes?”
> “Could you bring groceries on Thursday?”
> “Could we spend 20 minutes organizing my questions?”

3. Build a team around your needs

Your team can include a friend, neighbour, partner, adult child, chosen family, community organization or paid professional. Different people can help in different ways. Someone far away might help organize information by phone, while someone nearby helps with practical arrangements.

Agree on a backup for essential tasks. Be clear about what is confirmed and what still needs arranging.

© 2026 Aging Well Care Navigation Ltd. For personal and family use.
You are welcome to share this resource in its original form with credit to Aging Well. Not for resale.

Support That Works for You

Keep your choices at the centre

4. If your personal support network is limited

Tell your healthcare team when transport, cost, language, accessibility or managing at home may be a concern. Ask whether a social worker, care coordinator, interpreter or other support is available and how to access it.

Explore community organizations, volunteer programs and private services. Ask about eligibility, fees, availability and what each service provides.

5. Agree on communication and privacy

Decide who you want involved, what information you wish to share and how you would like updates handled. Ask your providers what consent arrangements are needed. Being a support person does not automatically give someone authority to make decisions for you.

Keep a simple record of appointments, questions, contacts and agreed next steps. Store personal information securely and share only what is needed.

How Aging Well can help

Karen Davis, Registered Social Worker and Founder of Aging Well Care Navigation, provides non-clinical care navigation, advocacy and practical coordination for adults and families in Calgary and surrounding communities.

Support can include preparing for and attending appointments, taking notes, identifying questions for your care team, exploring community resources, coordinating practical arrangements and following through on agreed next steps.

> Let your friends and family focus on being there for you. Let Aging Well help with the questions, coordination and next steps.

Start with one manageable step

Choose one task, one person or service to contact, and when to reach out. Find Preparing for Your Next Appointment on our Free Resources page.

Explore free resources: agingwellcalgary.com/free-resources

Request a complimentary 30-minute consultation
Telephone or Google Meet | 403-830-3301
agingwellcalgary.com/contact | hello@agingwellcalgary.com

General planning information. This resource does not replace individualized healthcare advice. Aging Well does not provide medical treatment, client transportation or emergency services.

© 2026 Aging Well Care Navigation Ltd. For personal and family use.
You are welcome to share this resource in its original form with credit to Aging Well. Not for resale.